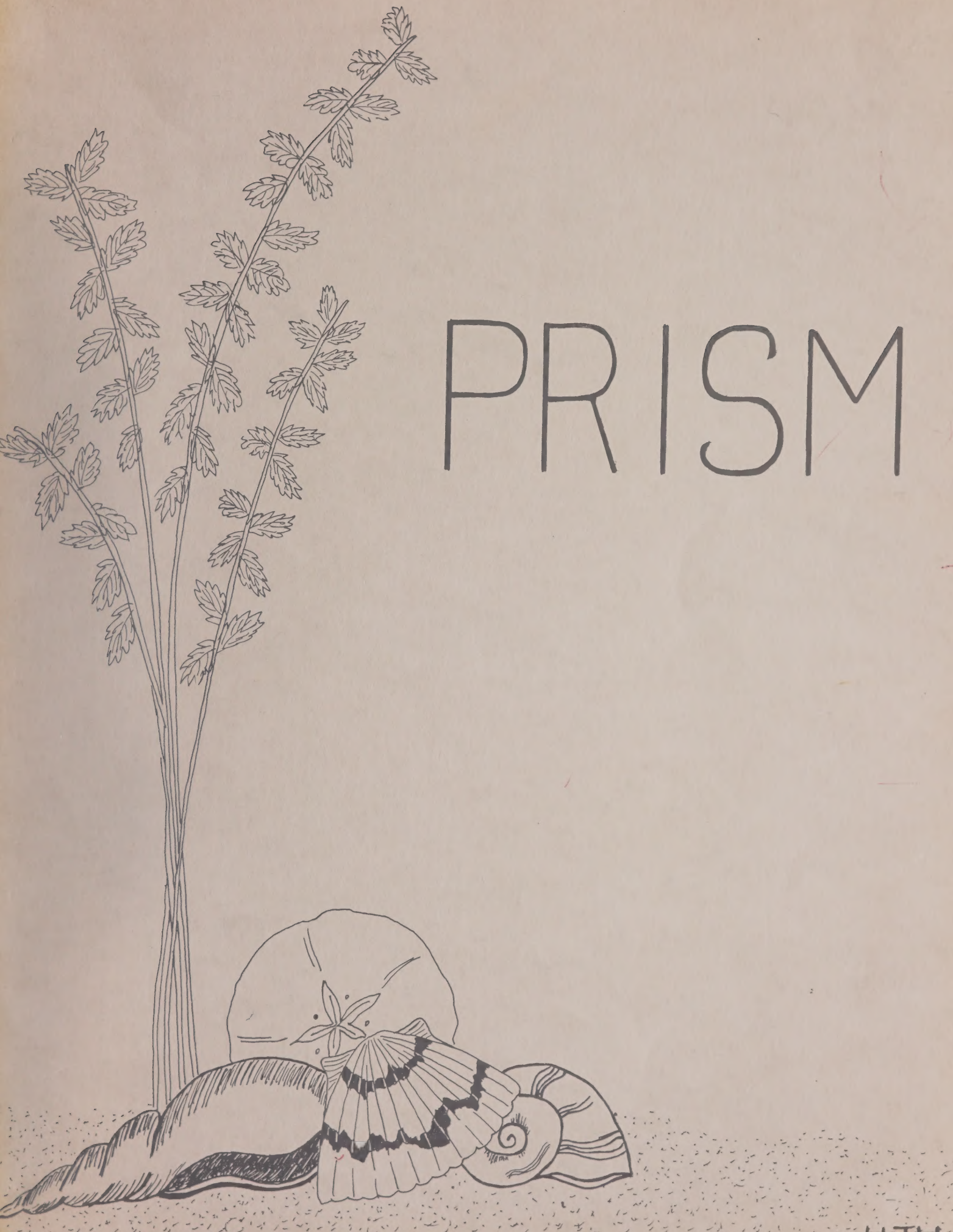
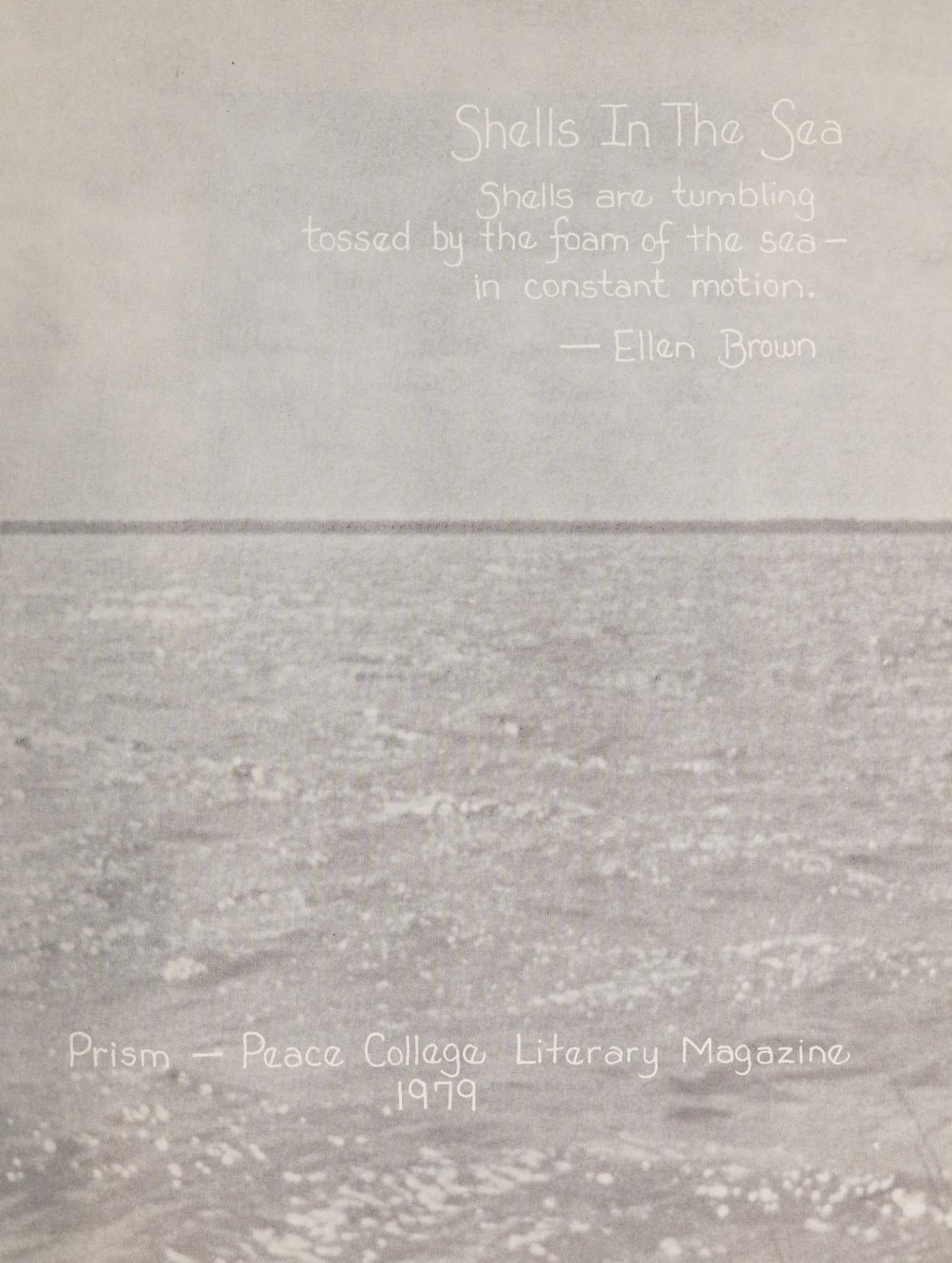


# PRISM

HJH

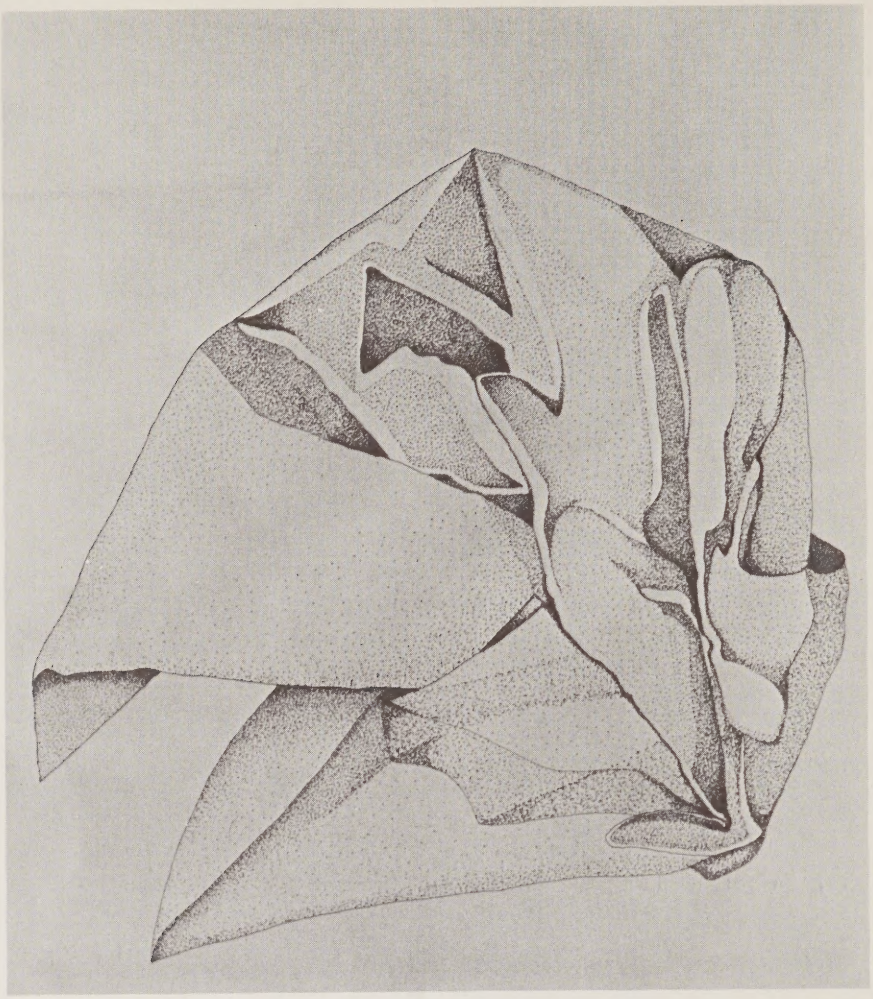


# Shells In The Sea

Shells are tumbling
tossed by the foam of the sea –
in constant motion.

— Ellen Brown

Prism — Peace College Literary Magazine
1979



--Tonnya Byrum
3rd Prize Art

## INSPIRATION

Stretching high on tiptoes,
I reach blindly for that idea
transparently floating
way beyond my grasp.
Inch by inch,
thought by thought,
I come closer.
Suddenly, it flies higher,
blooming, soaring, almost bursting
with promise.
Carefully, I stretch out my hand
to enclose that
precious piece of my mind.

--Evelyn Sylivant

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1st

Prize

VIRGINS MAY CATCH UNICORNS

Virgins,
Fair and meek
May catch unicorns,
Shy and sleek.
Daughters of Diana,
Religious in firm resolution,
Wait in meadows green
For wonderful white beasts.
Preserved and pure they pray
For patience, and a prize.

--Cindy Trew

BEFORE YOU

Before you
My days were wooden beads,
On a yellow string,
Each one round from the other.
Now my days run together,
Lovely,
Like a watercolor.

--Cindy Trew

TIME CONSUMING

Love me now and woo me later.
Save your charm for afterthought.
I can wait for winning words,
But linger in your loving not.

--Cindy Trew

# Poetry

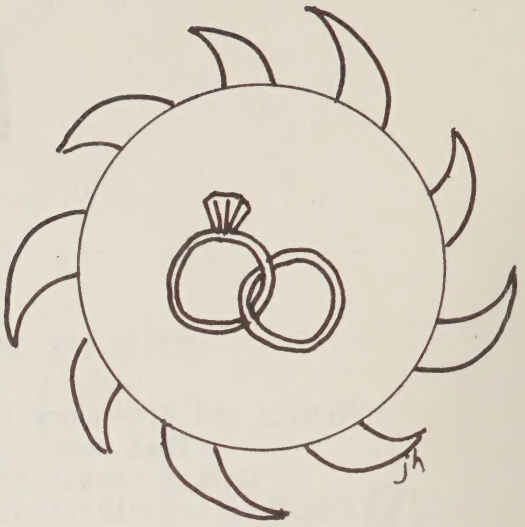
## WITHIN THE GREEN ARE REFLECTIONS OF GOLD

Within the green are reflections of gold
That come and leave
On the breath of the breath of the breeze.
Tumbling tendrils that promise jewelweeds
Are glazed heavy with dewy beads.
Lean, long ferns, yet unfurling,
Toss patterns of gold, soft and twirling.
Cool morning clover are warmly sun-gilded,
And pale, limpid leaves are flaxen threaded.

--Cindy Trew

## MARRIED

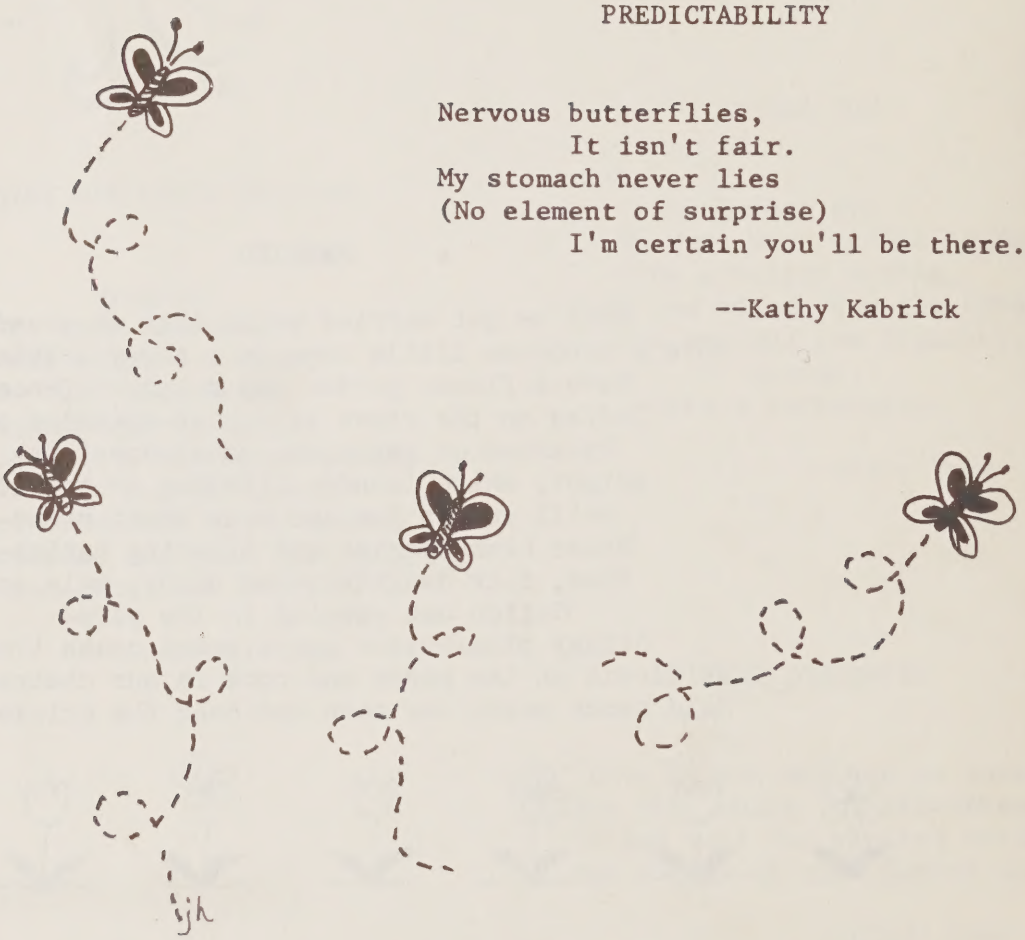
When we get married we'll live so grand-
Have a handsome little home in a happy little town-
Have a flower garden and a picket fence-
Coffee on the stove in a blue-speckled pot-
Splashes of geraniums on windowsills-
Bright, white laundry blinking on the line-
We'll put up jam and bake wheat bread-
Raise blackberries and blushing babies-
Fine, fair daughters and hardy, hale sons-
Calico cat yawning in the yard-
Sticky plum-briars and a sweet peach tree-
We'll sit on the porch and rock in our chairs-
Hold hands neath the moon and hear the crickets croon.



## MARRY IN THE MORNING

Marry in the morning
Your lover of the night.
Dawn gives a truer light to vows
Than does the shady candlelight.

--Cindy Trew



## PREDICTABILITY

Nervous butterflies,
It isn't fair.
My stomach never lies
(No element of surprise)
I'm certain you'll be there.

--Kathy Kabrick

## WINTER GULL

There, on a crisp, cold, winter's night a lone gull is eagerly searching for a satisfying morsel.

The shore lies dark and deserted. All signs of life have disappeared.

The glimmering moon above is reflected on the calm, winter's sea as smiles are often reflected on the faces of strangers.

The gull does not understand the eerie sensations surrounding him. It seems to him just yesterday the beach was filled with the laughter of children and the relieved sighs of older vacationers.

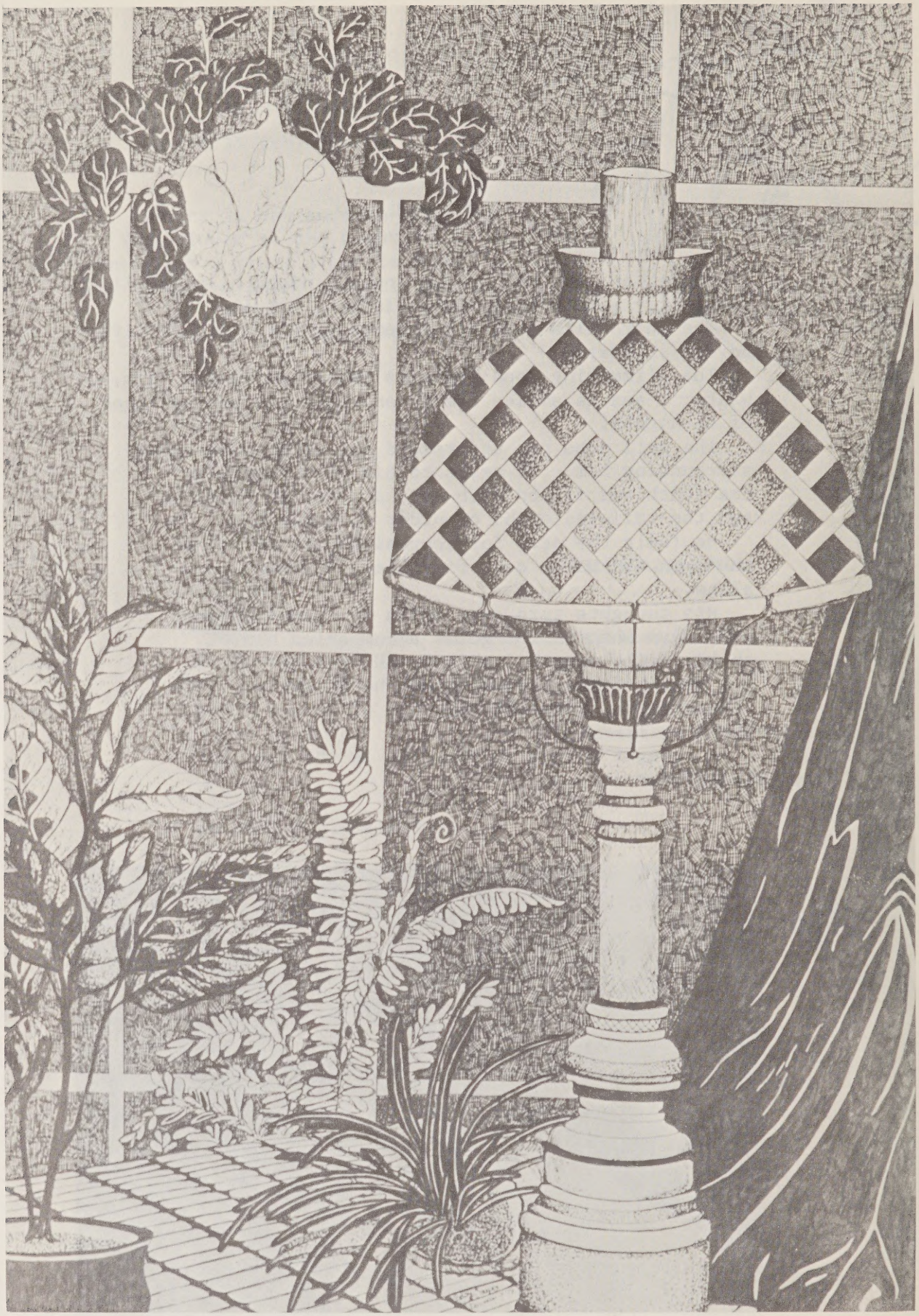
He feels the need for companionship, more than the moon and waves can offer him. Yet here he is, alone.

His thoughts turn once again to summer, to the warm days when fellow gulls accompanied him on his daily search for food. He wonders why he has been left in solitude, why he is the one gull chosen to remain as if the days of summer lingered still.

A thought occurs to him. He is the lone gull. The winter gull.

--Lydia Arden Edwards

--Lynn Lawing





1st Prize Art --Betsy Snipes

## ONCE AGAIN

Once again
The mystical hours begin
The few short moments
We can give each other
From our divided lives.

The hours pass by
And we drink each other up
We devour every particle of one another
And still
It is not enough.

Our eyes cannot touch the surface of our thoughts
Our words cannot express the feelings in our hearts
But our lips can meet
And our bodies can sigh
And our eyes can weep
For what was not.

And once again
The mystical hours disappear
And the feeling of what was not
Blinds us
Until the pain subsides and
We are two
Once again.

--Tracy Gibson

## VULNERABILITY

Isolation
brought many companions
when it came to visit me.
And soon my home was filled
with Emptiness.
It seemed to close the door at
every knock,
And before long I was a stranger
in my own house.
But life abounds everywhere
Somehow I know that I care
and so do you
So Isolation could not take these
gifts from me.
My home has been restored in
living
Because I've learned to love.

--Jane House

The flame of passion has cremated my soul.

--Terresa G. Newton

BEFORE THE SNAKE

The motionless water
reflects soft moonlight

A delicate breeze
stirs fresh floral air

Beneath cool palms
the two lie naked

Embraced as one
they speak in silence

Only soft sighs
of innocent passion

Lust unknown, unborn
--The Perfect Love.

--Tracy Gibson

THE UNDERWORLD

Cold and damp
So far from day.
Dark and misty
Oh so gray!
Yet in our minds we
Can change its sight
By realizing the beauty
And wonder of night.

--Josie Vega

## THE DAWN

It is dark.
Everything is quiet.
Everyone is sleeping.
Suddenly, a single ray of light appears.
It slowly grows clearer and clearer!
The birds begin to sing.
The crows call out "The morning begins!"
Tis dawn!

--Josie Vega

## EL ALBA

Es obscuro.
Todo esta calladito.
Todos estan durmiendo.
Entonces viene una luz,
Y lentamente crece mas claro y claro!
Los pajaritos cantan.
Los cuervos llaman, "¡ la manana empieza!"
Es el albá.

--Josie Vega

--Lynn Lawing

## THE STAGE

If it's true that all the world's a stage,
I would like to play the harlequin.
To be the center of a comical rage,
Where everything is pretend.

In pantomine I'd like to clown,
Causing laughter by a voiceless portrayal.
There, where secrets make not a sound,
Eliminating bitter betrayal.

--Kathy Kabrick

The tongue is a trampoline,
For words and thoughts
That shouldn't exercise.

--Terresa G. Newton

## OLD OAK TREE

Leaning on the trunk of a scarred oak tree,
Seated in the nest of a raggedy, green rug--
An apparition comes to mind:
I wonder how long it took for those
Peacock array of brancees to untwine?

--Ellen Brown

# Fiction Award

## ALL ON A SUMMER'S DAY

--Carol Carney

The weary waves caressed my feet as they tumbled in to shore. The storm had passed, yet darkness still hung like a pall over the beach--and me. "Just another storm at sea," I thought to myself with a sarcastic smile.

It had been a long summer.

I smiled again, a painful, aching smile, chastising myself for my weakness. "I who used to be so strong," I thought with a laugh, and drawing my feet free from the suction of the wet sand, I turned and walked toward higher ground.

So much had happened in so little time. Wet clothes clinging, I sat on a not-much-drier dune. A family broken up, never-meant words said, a suicide, day after day after day of painful, useless living. And now, with the end of summer and my fruitless search for reason, where was I to go? Oh, once I had been so sure, always able to find the answers to my questions within myself, forsaking all others, family, friends, God. But all I had found so far was emptiness and no clear understanding of my own suffering, much less anyone else's. Feeling hopeless, cold, tired, and alone, I lay down on the moist sand and let the carefree song of the sea sing me into a fitful sleep.

I awoke with a start to another song--a small voice merrily singing. Unable to stare into the glare of the sun to see who was sitting in front of me, I shaded my eyes with a chilled, somewhat sandy hand and asked, "Who's there?" "Just me," a voice said, and I saw my awakener as he moved, blocking the sun with his body.

It was a boy, quite young, really. The sunrays from behind lit his curly, light brown hair to gold, and his white shirt and shorts shone so that I shut and rubbed my eyes.

"You were really sleeping, weren't you?" the little boy said, "You've already missed the dolphins and most of the good shells are gone by now."

"It's none of your business what I do," I retorted irritably, wishing that he would go away. But the boy just sat there, admiring the shells he had obviously found earlier that morning, holding them up to catch the sunlight on their still glistening surfaces.

"Do you always bother strangers on the beach?" I asked, glaring at him. "Somebody could decide to kill or kidnap or molest you, you know. The way I feel this morning, I just may be one of those people. So run along home, now."

A radiant smile passed over the boy's face and it struck me that, for a moment, he was vaguely familiar. He reminded me of a stained-glass portrait of a cherub--round, pink cheeks (but not fat), bright grey eyes, and an air of innocence.

"I don't bother strangers," the boy said with his cherub smile. "I've seen you around here for a while. Anyway," he added, "I'm trying to collect shells. Want to help?"

Strangely enough, I felt myself soften toward the kid with the cherub smile. Something about him, his carefree independence, maybe, reminded me of someone... The vision of a young girl, headstrong, sure of herself, flashed before my eyes. "Me?" I asked out loud.

"Sure," the boy said, thinking I was talking to him, "but it's getting late and if we want to find any really good shells we'd better hurry." With that, he got up and walked down to the tide, and, leaving misgivings and troubles behind for a while, I got up and walked down the beach after him.

"Where do you live, anyway?" I asked him as we searched the moist sand under a fishing dock for especially spectacular shells.

"Oh, up there," he said disinterestedly, pointing obscurely up the beach. "I live with my father." Then, catching me off guard, he looked at me and said, "Are you an orphan?"

"Of course not!" I answered defensively. "I just want to be alone for a while to think some things out. So right now I'm taking care of myself." Looking down at the sand-coated, rain-stiffened jeans and sweatshirt I was wearing, I added with a laugh, "or trying to, anyway."

I waited for the boy to say something, but he remained silent. Sighing, I looked down at the sand and put my hands in my pockets.

"You see," I explained, "my parents got a divorce recently, and, well, I lost a sister. And now my relatives and I aren't on speaking terms." I paused a moment before continuing. "I'm a lousy 'Job" when it comes to patient suffering and faith and all that, you know. I guess I'm trying to find answers to questions that don't have answers--at least not that I can find."

First a frown, then a smile crossed the boy's face and he clasped my hands in childish affection, grey eyes sparkling with certainty. "If you want, he said, "you can ask my father and he'll help you. I always ask him questions and he always answers them. It's nice to ask somebody big who knows answers."

A voice echoed in my mind, the voice of my grandmother, calm and low and far away. "You can't trust only yourself for answers. Some things can only be solved through God." I heard my own retort, harsh, cruel, bitter. "He's your God, not mine, thank you. If God permits such pain and suffering in His world, then I'll find my way through it without Him."

The echoes died away and I found myself back on a sunny beach, the boy looking eagerly up at me. "You're an angel," I said roughing up his curly sun-streaked hair and turning away to hide my sudden unexplainable tears. Turning away from that cherub smile.

We spent all that morning walking along the surf, searching for shells. Cowries, Turbans, Auger shells--we found a colorful assortment that would delight any child. Yet the boy kept looking, scanning the sand for something more.

"Look," I said after an hour of what I considered successful collecting, "what exactly are you looking for? Conch shells? Wrong

time of year. Sand dollars? Starfish? Nautilus? What's wrong? What could possibly be missing out of all these shells?"

"Angel wings," the boy said, sitting down in the sand, "angel wings."

I sat down beside him heavily, putting my hands on my hips in exasperation.

"Well, what are angel wings?" I asked. "If you tell me, I'll know what to look for."

"I don't know exactly," he said slowly, "angel wings. Kind-of like clam shells--only real small and longish. Just angel wings."

"Oh," I said, somewhat relieved, "I bet I know what you mean. Only I call them butterfly wings. They're really named Wedge or Coquina shells, I think. Some are quite pretty, and there are usually tons of them around."

The boy smiled and his grey eyes caught the light from the sun and sparkled like the sea. "Well, I'm going to look until I find what I'm looking for and I'm not going to give up," he said. Then, with the cherub smile, "You won't quit either, will you?"

So we got up and walked along the surf, searching for angel wings and finding everything but angel wings.

We parted that afternoon after a lunch of hot dogs and Pepsi bought at a snack stand a few miles down the beach. All morning we had scanned for angel wings, but we never even found so much as a piece of one. "Maybe you will find some tomorrow," I had said as we turned to go our separate ways, "or late tonight when the tide comes in. You never know." "Nope," he said with his smile, "you never know."

As I walked back toward my rented room, it occurred to me that I hadn't even found out the boy's name, yet I couldn't get him out of my mind. What he said, "You won't quit either, will you," and "It's nice to talk to somebody big who knows," still rang in my ears.

"Maybe it's time I do ask somebody else," I thought to myself as I leaned out of my window to look at the stars that night. "Maybe it's time to end this insane war between the world and God and me." I paused a moment and sighed. "But where do I begin? Where?"

The song of the sea flowed around me, seeming to carry me out with the tide. Slowly I saw in my mind a bright yellow room crowded with boxes, two little girls in their midst, surveying the small room and stacked crates with doubtful expressions. My sister and me. "How are we ever going to get everything unpacked and put away," the younger girl whined as she sat on a box, chin in hands. "I don't even know where to begin." "Well," the older girl replied, opening a large box and tossing her sister some curtains, "I've always heard that the best way to begin something is just to start."

Just to start. Suddenly I was back in my rented room again, alone still, but now determined to begin my understanding, and, as the boy had said, not quit until I found what I was looking for.

But what could I say about now? About the past? About this summer?

It had been a summer of asking myself why, never sharing my troubles, never asking anyone for anything. Or, rather, a whole

lifetime of asking only me, trusting only me to find answers. Answers that never came.

The boy's beaming face shone through my thoughts and I turned my eyes toward the sea. Gathering up my courage, I spoke out loud, quiet but strong.

"Okay," I said, "why. Tell me why people suffer. Tell me why there are suicides and divorces and hate, and why you let people get scarred from life to the point of becoming blind or unable to ever feel again. Tell me why my father left, leaving my family shattered. And why someone I love could reject her life in one night's depression?" Lowering my voice, I wiped my tear-filled eyes and concentrated on the silvery mass of the sea. "And tell me why words are spoken in heat and haste to hurt another. Tell me why, God, tell me why!"

Yet even as I spoke, my spirit laughed a little at the thought of a single lonely girl challenging the ways of the world and of God.

No storm clouds rolled dramatically up from sea. No lightening, no miracles of revelation. Silence flowed around me like the sea.

To my surprise my own voice broke the silence. "Perhaps some things don't have answers," I said quietly. Laughing bitterly, I continued. "Maybe it's all just a big joke. Maybe God is just a selfish being who makes us suffer to appreciate not suffering. How does that story go--it feels so good when it stops? Or maybe God is above caring for man's troubles, maybe He's given up on us altogether. Or maybe--maybe there is no God at all."

But even as I finished speaking, I knew that it wasn't true--that I spoke only out of desperation. I had it all planned out. If He wouldn't explain things to me then I'd explain them in a way that would keep me from being hurt and that would get even with Him at the same time.

"So much for one hypothesis," I sighed to myself. Silently I stared out at the silver sea.

"All right," I said after a few miserable minutes, "what if man didn't suffer. If Eve hadn't taken that serpent's bait, if she had shunned the forbidden fruit, then what would the human race be today? Just two innocent children in a garden! If I just went through life on a magic carpet, sailing over the bumps and canyons and gliding up the rocky mountains of life, what would I be like? How could I begin to know myself, to glimpse God and strive for Him and fall, again and again, struggling to move further ahead each time I stumble back up? To be, to grow, to learn and live--to suffer? Or is it all the same? Joy or suffering, it's living!"

Leaning my cheek against the window sill I thought how my life was like a puzzle with hundreds of tiny, complex pieces. "If only I can put those pieces together again," I whispered to the wind, "if only I can find the way..."

In the stillness of the summer night I stood, and for agonizing moments my mind echoed with the emptiness of despair. "Oh God!" I cried, "there will be a way and I <u>will</u> find it, but I just can't do it alone!" Pushing myself from the supportive window I ran from the room and outside, down the beach--running hard, not knowing even to where,

running beneath the black velvet canopy of the sky. Sobbing, out of breath, I blindly tripped on a rough, splintered beam of wood washed up from the earlier tide. I twisted as I fell, scraping the back of my left hand on the obstacle as I groped to catch myself. Furious with myself and the wood, I turned to strike it with my fist, yet something prevented me. A memory--a memory of a sand encrusted rugged beam of wood covered with barnicles, and of a little boy sitting beside it, shining with the excitement of discovery, calling to me, calling me over to him calling me back ...

"Oh, look at this one," the boy shouted to me, eagerly motioning me over to where he knelt. "Tell me what it is!"

It was early afternoon and the sun was hot and high in the sky. We'd been walking along the beach for quite a while and were yet to have found anything of special interest. The boy had stopped by the driftwood beam, examining the soft, sunken sand around it for shells.

"Quiet down now, and let me see it, okay?" No need to get so excited," I laughed tolerantly. Beaming over his new found prize, the little boy gently handed it to me, then looked at me with sparkling grey eyes. "Well, I said in genuine admiration, "it certainly is strange, I'll say that for it!"

In my palm I held a small shell, or part of a shell, quite unlike any I had ever seen before. Its age was unfathomable--the fine, deep lines it once must have displayed were now worn down to mere smooth ripples on its surface. Small orange splotches adorned the underside of one of its edges, and it had been so broken from life at sea that it was virtually impossible to tell what type of shell it once had been.

"One thing's for sure," I said after inspecting it, "its seen a lot of wear-and-tear! Even these broken edges have been worn down as smooth as silk! So much for years of crashing waves and sand! And here," I added, pointing to the orange spots, "it looks like something was attached to it and got broken or torn off, or maybe just left a stain. Poor old shell's had a hard life." I thoughtfully turned it over in my hand.

Looking up at me innocently, strikingly angelically, the boy smiled. "I think it's beautiful."

"Well," I said handing it back to him, "I don't know about its being beautiful or not, but it's a tough little shell. Here you go, it's all yours--a definitely interesting one to add to your collection!"

Taking it in his hands the boy cradled the shell for a minute, then looked at me with piercing grey eyes. "It's the most beautiful shell I've even seen because it's so strong and beat up--and so awfully small," he said.

I laughed at him a moment, then felt somehow strangely touched by his sensitivity. "To each his own," I said with a grin, "although I rather thought you liked angel wings the best over everything! Take it home with your other shells and see how your father likes it!"

"Oh," the boy replied with his simple, knowing smile, "my father will love it just like he loves all the others, even angel wings."

A cold chill ran through my body bringing me back into reality. Slowly I realized that the incoming waves must have crept to where I knelt. Looking around me, rather shocked to find it night and myself alone in it, I caught my breath, then breathed out in a sort of startled wonder. "Of course," I whispered out loud, "that's it. One simple shell!" Seemingly unable to move, I remained where I knelt, letting the waves wash heedlessly around me.

"Maybe that's how it is," I thought to myself. "We go through life and become battered, broken and stained, yet through it all we become, in a changed way, something better? The shell before its torment at sea would have been just another shell, but through its battering it has become something more than it would have been--it gained a sort of strength and beauty it would never have found otherwise . . ." The crashing of the waves filled my mind, and the cool of the tide seemed to flow within me. "Maybe, just maybe, then, we gain more through our pain and our suffering than we lose."

I paused for a moment, my heart suddenly pounding over the sound of the sea. "If I can believe that," I thought slowly, "then everything that has happened, all that I have seen . . ." God!" I cried, "that's so much to believe! But I think that I must believe it, or believe nothing at all!"

Picking myself up from the half-inch deep water, I stood tall and looked out over the sea. "I choose to believe it, You know," I said finally, resolvedly. "But then You knew I would anyway, didn't You?"

Slowly, feeling a great weariness but also a strange strength, I turned back toward the dark shape of my summer home. "I guess it's time to go home and start all over again," I said to myself as I approached the front walk. "I guess it's time to go home and stop demanding the 'whys' of living and start seeking the 'hows' to live."

By 10 o'clock the next morning most of my belongings were safely packed in my car. All but the clothes that I was wearing--and a jacket, an old blue jacket with embroidery on the back. This I held for a moment to preserve the memory of a young woman, taller and more fragile than I, who had worn it not so long ago. My sister. I hugged it for a moment, and, putting it around my shoulders, walked out the door to visit the beach one last time, hoping that I would find the boy before I left.

For some unknown reason I decided to find the grassy dune where I had first met him so many, and yet so few, hours before.

I ran to the very spot and stood staring.

There on the flat sandy base of the dune where the boy had stood, illuminated by the sun, lay two small, shining objects. Moving closer, I caught my breath.

Reflecting the ever-brilliant morning sun shone two golden yellow sea shells--two, though connected.

"Angel wings," I whispered, stooping to pick them up. Hadn't we searched for some like these the day before? And, scribbled in the sand was a message, though not really a message at all, just a name. "Gabriel," it said.

Golden angel wings from Gabriel, the boy with the gold-streaked brown curls, grey eyes, smile of a cherub. "If he wasn't, he ought to be," I said quietly.

It had been a heck of a summer.

## PRACTICE ROOM 3

Straight I sit on a hard wooden bench
in a room 4 x 8.
A solitary window interrupts cement block
monotony.
Identical linoleum squares line up across the floor.
Glaring yellow light pierces still, stale
cubicled air.
Time inches by like a thief who knows he's
being watched.
A rectangle of window panes offers a view
of the world outside, reminding me of the
unprocrastinated task that lies before me.
Resolutely, I lift my hands and make music.

--Evelyn Sylivant

## AUTUMN ILLUSTRATION

I sit behind shiney panes
In quiet observation,
Of new decorations
That nature bestows
To openly show
Her Autumn Illustration.

Perhaps she wants to justify
Her terminal domination,
So giving invitation
To see the Autumn splendor
That only she can render
Quiets summer lamentation.

--Kathy Kabrick

## MOTHER RAIN

Rain, like the soothing caress of a mother,
falls to sprinkle the earth with comfort.
Flowers open mouths, extend arms to receive
refreshing sustenance.
Glistening green, the leaves of trees are nourished
by guardian skies.
Grass, boundless as the heavens, grows lush with
each quenching drop of enriching rain.

--Evelyn Sylivant

## RECIPE

The ingredients are quite common
The directions simple too
You take golden drops of sunshine
I take words of love from you
And we mix them both together
In a crystal sea of blue
Add a pinch of laughter
And we call it rainbow stew.

--Sarah Brown

# 2nd Prize Poetry

AUTUMN IMAGES

Mornings bitten by playful puppies.
Coughing engines plagued by first colds.
Cautions yellow buses dotting black ribbons.
Pigskins shadowed by lights and screams.
Arthritic fields of rigid cornstalks.
Roadside stands laden with fire-bright pumpkins,
baskets of gold and red apples, baskets of brick-orange yams.
Artists' brushes stroking maples and oaks,
pallettes splashed with scarlet and bronze,
each leaf adorned, nature's masterpieces.
Devilish orange jacks delighting tricksters.
Gathering together, remembering pilgrims,
Thanks given for freedom and hope.
Harvest hours fading with the last rays of warmth.

--Julianne Smith

PAM

looking over spring-green fields.
feeling the tickling sea-foam grass.
inhaling the sweetness of untamed honeysuckle.
listening to the quietness of laboring ants.
tasting the enlightening fruits of Eden.
living . . .

--Julianne Smith

## WITHOUT YOU

An all-alone night
Spent thinking of you.
The fire must be warm,
but I cannot feel it.

The windows are icy,
A whistling chills,
Wrapped tightly in blankets,
I still feel no warmth.

Come home to me now,
not in my dreams,
but into my arms.
Let me know warmth again.

I hear you again
say, "I don't want to leave you."
Then why did you leave me
to an all-alone night?

--Julianne Smith

--Debbie Johnson

## THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

Poor little Amy,
With only rags to wear.
No home to call her own
No parents - all . . . alone.
Then comes God's sweet release,
As doves' wings lift her and
Carry her home . . . To Mom and Dad.

Or there was Beth.
Crippled, aching with defeat.
There are kids who make cruel jokes
People who stare . . and whisper . . .
Not knowing there's a soul
In that body.
So the soul leaves
Defeated.
And yet glorified in the end.

Finally, there was a little girl
Unknown to us by name
Yet she was seen on the streets
Selling matches, so she could buy food
The streets just glistened with
The beauty of the snow
But the little match girl
Didn't notice . . .
She could only feel the bitter cold.
On her aching . . . blue . . . feet.
There was no buttered Turkey
With stuffing
Waiting for her at home.
Only a bitter and cold Mother and Father
Who would beat her . . .
If she didn't bring money home.

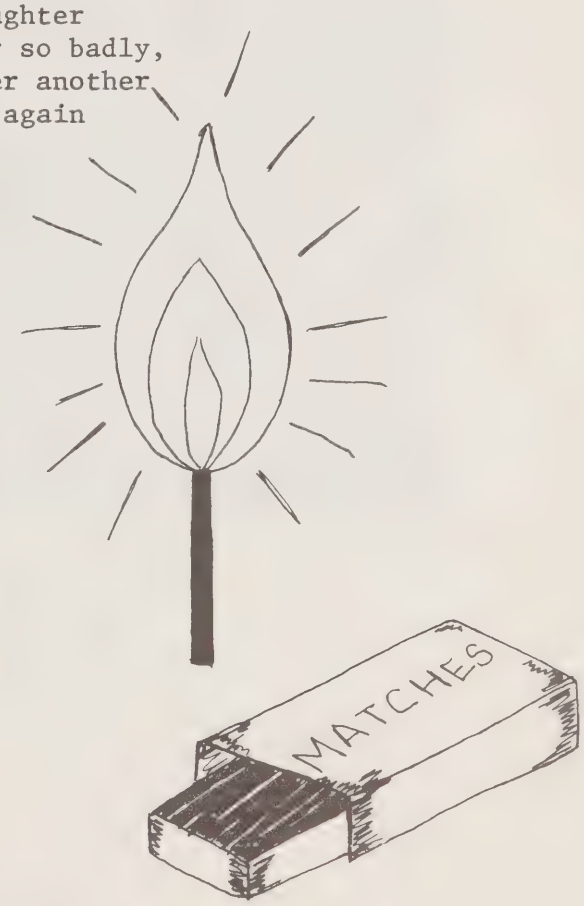
Suddenly - an idea!
"Matches produce fire and fire gives warmth!"
So with her tiny, popsicle - like hands
She lit - just - one - match.
In that tiny little flame
She saw a vision
A fire proudly blazing
As she reached out towards it
It was gone - just as the match went out.

Yet with hope
She lit another -
This time she saw a plump, juicy
Turkey - just waiting to be eaten!
Just as she reached out.
The light flickered
The vision was gone.
Still not discouraged - she lit another
And behold!
She saw a Christmas tree
Full of tiny candles!
How beautiful a sight that was!
Then she reached out - again
For, "Just a little touch?"
But the candles rose into the sky
She lit another match.
The most beautiful vision of all appeared!
Her wonderful, kind Grandmother
With a gentle smile across her wrinkled face
And loving arms, stretched out from her frail body,
Reaching for her weary little granddaughter
The poor child wanted to stay with her so badly,
That she lit all the matches, one after another
For fear that she'd be left all alone again
But, Grandmother didn't disappear
Instead she picked the child up
In a warm fleecy blanket
And carried her away.
Away from hunger, cold and pain
To a land of warmth in love and peace
Home to God.

In the morning - New Year's Day
Her body was found - dead - frozen.
With an angelic smile left
On that beautiful little face
With snowflakes in her hair
And matches in the palm of her hand.

A sweet release; a soul glorified.
Never to feel hunger, or the
Bitter cold - again.

--Josie Vega



2nd Prize Art



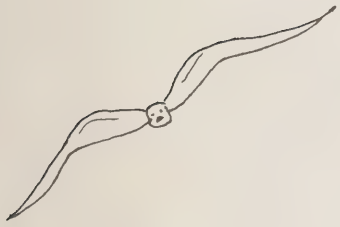
--Betsy Norris

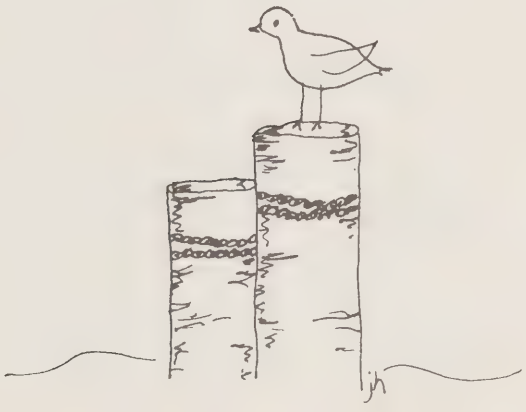
# 3rd Prize Poetry

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THE SEA

Seagulls soar high above the shining blue sea
searching for glistening objects surfacing.
Loud screeches of hunger escape from
small gliding bodies.
The alluvion breaks along strips of eroded shore -
tossing tiny inhabitants,
shells,
shrimp,
sand fiddlers,
out of the cool dark sea onto burning sands
where many leave their mobile homes
behind.

--Ellen Brown





## THE CAMPUS

Reclining on my bed, looking out my window,
I see squirrels playing "catch me if you can;"
Scurrying over the raggedy, green rug, leaping onto
Trunks of scarred oak trees.
Glassy tear drops plunge over top lip of greenish-
Gray stone into fountain's base.
Sweet fragrances of magnolia blooms dominate
The breeze flowing into half-opened window.
Red-white-and-blue, stars-and-stripes
Curl around ploe with each drifting air current
Sun-parched columns reflect rays of white light.

--Ellen Brown

## FANTASY BALL

Knights adorned in sparkling tinsel
gallantly lead ladies draped in
long,
flowing,
taffeta gowns.
Satin silk swish as couples sashay,
waltzing across
thecrowdedballroom.
Clock strikes twelve-
all fantasies
cease.

--Ellen Brown

## BLOOD-STAINED INK

Poets write on sheep skins
words flowing from within,
turning into blood stains
as tears smear the ink.

--Ellen Brown

## A DELIBERATE DAY

"Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. ...To be awake is to be alive. I have never yet met a man who was quite awake. Now could I have looked him in the face?" (Henry David Thoreau)

How can I dare to look at myself even in a mirror? The images reflected can't recall the lost, fearful soul inside. God, the real, alive frustration is that not a long time ago I reached one of those drastic low points in living when the taste of life goes falt ant stale, energy subsides, and creativity dies. Every morning I would wake up on the wrong side of the bed, grip my teeth and mutter, "There's got to be some meaning. There's got to be more than bowing back my shoulders and forcing my head to stay above the water. Somewhere, for some reason, my restleness will find contentment--but where? There's got to be an answer."

But the barren days went by, and my eyes continued to be closed to any sort of reality. My decision to go on a journey of self-discovery came with a friend's suggestion and instructions. I was told to go to the beach alone the following morning, arriving about the time the sun was supposed to rise. My friend handed me four pieces of paper he had written on and told me to look at them separately throughout the day.

The next morning, a little disillusioned, I drove to the beach. There was a deafening silence about the lonely expanse of sand. A strong wind was blowing; the sea's waters were turbulent and angry. What was I to do with a whole day of nothing? I unfolded one of the pieces of paper. On it was written: "Open your ears and listen."

I stared at those carefully selected words. Had I really ever listened or had I always shut out all voices but my own? I raised my head and I did listen, probably for the first time in my life. There were no sounds except for the constant bellow of the sea whose voice at times was so loud that even the cry of the gull could not be heard. And yet, I thought--suddenly, there must be more, there must be something beneath these sounds--

perhaps the soft whisperings of reeds and rushes blowing in the wind. There were meant to be heard if the listener got close enough to hear them. You see, according to Thoreau, "All sound heard at the greatest possible distance produces one and the same effect, a vibration of universal lyre, just as the intervening atmosphere makes a distant ridge of earth interesting to our eyes by the azure tint it imparts to it." I feel that I made a significant discovery as I, in an impulsive mood, thrust my head foolishly into the dune grasses. Here I found that if you concentrate and listen intently, there is a fractional moment in which the world stops moving--everything seems to pause. In that glorious moment of stillness, I realize that I am just as small as a grain of sand and that as soon as the wind starts blowing again, I'll be thrown against more shells and grasses . . . Forever trying to find a place to settle.

Never before have I heard such sounds--sounds that as a child taught me many lessons of the sea. I have a great deal of respect for the sea; it does not offer fools another chance. And the sea teaches us a certain amount of patience, for no one can calm the oceans nor can he hurry the comings and goings of the tide. That morning I became aware of the vast mystery within the sea; and of the organized scheduling of its cleanness, with every beach swept twice a day by the tide's broom. Thoreau seemed to see this clean sweep also when describing the pond in Walden. "These are the lips of the lake, on which no beard grows. And then again, "The life in us is like the water in the river. It may rise this year higher than man has ever known it, and flood the parched uplands . . . ." You know, I thought, maybe there is a chance for us all to start over again. Maybe we should follow Thoreau's creed, "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again."

By noon, I decided to unfold the second piece of paper. And again I sat there, half-amused and half-exasperated. Three words this time. "Try Reaching Back."

Back to what? Was I really supposed to reflect back on my past when all that concerned me was in the present

or future? And yet, I realized, here I was at the beach where so many happy moments had been spent. Maybe somewhere in those happy memories was an answer. "Try Reaching Back." Um . . . back, back, back. What makes people happy?--Confidence, love, sense of security, independence? If, then, we deliberately reach back to grasp the concept of happiness, might there not be a short release of power as we remember the still hour of the sea's withdrawal and then the sea's return when the waves pound the beach, pressing and struggling together to reach the seaweed which mark the last high tide. Might that bit of seaweed remind me that my life, as well as the sea, recedes and returns eternally. This constant struggle reminds me of something Thoreau said: "I went to the woods (in my case, the beach) because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life."

By three o'clock the tide was out; the sound of the waves was only a rhythmic whisper, like a giant breathing. I stayed in my sandy nest waiting for "my cup to run over." There was a stillness--an isolation--a spiritual solitude. Thoreau said, "We are never alone." It has also been said that "No man is an island." Yet sometimes I feel we are all islands--in a common sea.

Relaxing a bit, I decided that the instructions were becoming easier to take. But I was not prepared for the next one. This time my reaction was defensive. The words sounded more like a command than a gentle suggestion. "Reexamine Your Motives." My motives--well what's wrong with my motives? Maybe I don't know what I want out of life, and maybe I do want to be successful and recognized--but so does everybody. Everybody? Why do I have to be like everyone else? Maybe my motives aren't what they should be. Maybe I should be my own person and quit trying to live up to the ideals of others. "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

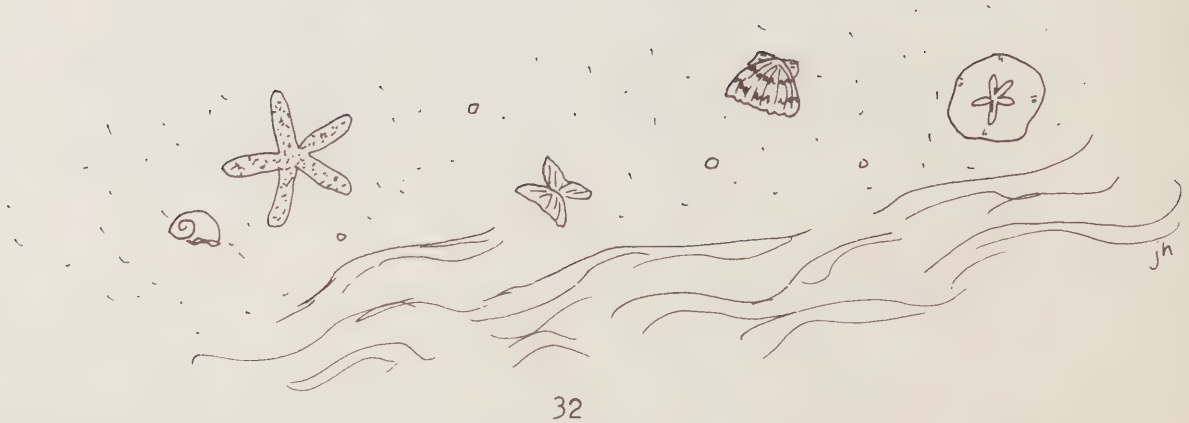
Letting a handful of sand slip through my fingers, I thought about my past. Following Thoreau's suggestion, I had tried, "As long as possible (to) live free and uncommitted." There had always been something spontaneous

and unplanned about my life, something free. Yet lately, my life had been defined, calculated, and dead. Why? Because I had lost touch with the true sense of giving, of helping people, in a frantic clutch at security.

For a long time I sat there. I began to look at the outside of a shell and the outside of my life. The complete answer is not to be found on the outside. The final answer, I know, is always on the inside. But the outside can give a clue. One is free, like the hermit crab, to change one's shell. Shell--I put you down again, but you have set my mind on a journey, up an inwardly winding staircase of thought.

My time at the beach had almost run out. The sky was a blaze of crimson as I took out the last slip of paper. I walked slowly to the shoreline and read the words again. Five words this time: "Let your troubles wash away." I knew it was time to go. Thoreau said, "I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one." It was time for me to leave the beach. The sea does not reward those who are greedy. With that fleeting thought, I picked up a shell and wrote my thoughts, anxieties, and fears in the sand. Then I walked away and did not look back. The tide was coming in.

--Jan Braswell



## LIFE'S ALLEGORY

Day be to Life, where all things live as one;
Dawn starts anew with the morning's breath;
Plants welcome gladly the rays from the sun;
Man rises happily and thinks not of death.
Lively are the living, alone and when they meet;
Children love playing 'till dirty are they and sore;
Men work the fields to have enough to eat;
Mothers still clean the things cleaned the day before.
Night be to Death--it's the final seal;
Dusk causes sleepiness, chin on chest;
God help the little ones, we know how they feel;
Tonight their parents go asleep, forever rest.
Live out your life, while the light is here.
Dusk sneaks in. Night soon falls. Death is near.

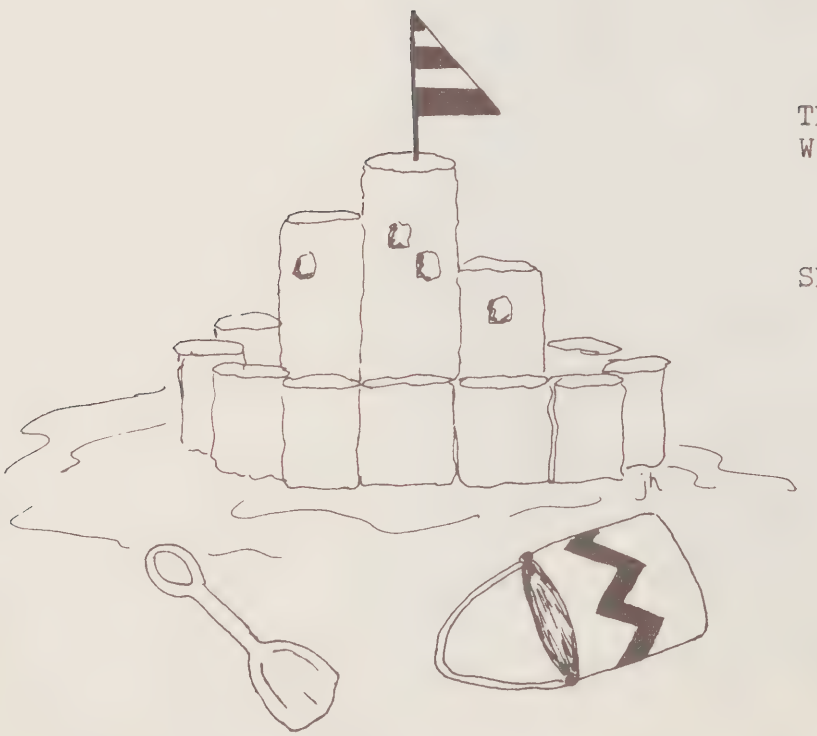
--Susan Costilow

--Debbie Johnson

# 3rd Prize

Perhaps the rainbow of my soul
    can spread its glow of hope
    beyond the realm of reality,
possibly to puncture
    the fantasy bubble
    which poisons the mind
where dreams but live and die
    unnoticed
where life becomes stifled
    in its costume of make-believe
and ideas are but perpetual infants.

--Sarah Brown



Your sandcastle eyes
   reflect vague recollections
   of frothy peaks
         and
   salty destruction.
They sparkle with dried pain.
Within them lies a princess
   undaunted by newborn waves
   yet captured behind
   a moat of memory.
She waits silently
   to be set free.

--Sarah Brown

# Poetry

Within a puddle of fading footsteps,
    muddled words and sandcastle dreams
        are washed away.
Bubbles of time
    pop
        and drown.
In reflection,
    a boy ponders the darkness
    of a melting future
        mingling quietly with
        the last drops of yesterday's laughter.
Today remains stagnant,
    stale
        as a withered daisy.
An icy tear blurs the mirrored mind
    with a painful splash
        before being sucked into the gutter,
        where memories lurk
        and hated loves dissolve.
The boy wonders
    as the puddle disappears
        leaving the scar of a tear...
            an evaporated boyhood...
                and the shadow of a man.

--Sarah Brown

3rd Prize Art



--Jennifer Williams

GROWING UP

I left you yesterday
Trusted you with my Raggedy Ann
I went home
And then to school
"Come out and play with me"
"Sorry, not today"
Raggedy Ann has long since been put away.
The closet shelf will not keep her
Quite as warm as she used to be.
Trusted you with a fift of mine
Now it's gone and left behind.

--Jane House

Once upon a time...
I shared my Thumbelina
my measles
my nightmares
my lollipops
Meanwhile...
I grew up
sharing
my hopes
my tears
my laughter
my love
Happily ever after...
I gave my heart
But now
from one Indian giver
to another
I want it back.

--Sarah Brown

6/7/78

It's been a while--a year or so
Since we've been at the park, and oh!
What times we had! What wonderous things
We dreamed of sailing on our swings!
Yet something's changed, you're quiet now;
You couldn't have forgotten how
We swore allegiance (ever true)
To long lost loves--and friendship too?
But here I sit and there you stand
The swing on which you rest your hand
Sways slowly as the setting sun
Casts solemn shadows, one by one . . .

No, you, my friend, are not the friend
I knew back then,
Or will again--
You say that you've found better things
Than soaring high
On rusty swings . . .

Like 8-to-5 and meeting classes?
Paying bills and income taxes?
Places to go and words to keep
(and miles to go before you sleep?)

But as I speak you interrupt
And ask me when I'm growing up.

A single hidden tear I cry
Don't ask me why.
We say goodbye.

I'll hear the wind against my ears
And dream of golden yesteryears
And push my swing so way up high
And feel the world go rushing by . . .

--Carol Carney

## FRESHMAN BLUES

Tears roll down my face
I sob...
Home is so far away...
I need to see that old familiar face...
Mom, wiping her hands on her apron
My warm and fluffy cat sitting in the window...
Waiting for me.
The creaking front door
The aroma of Spanish rice cooking
On the stove.
A warm embrace.
To be home again!

--Josie Vega

## THE SOPHOMORE

Here I sit in the prime of my
wisefool year,
Wise to live by learned notions-
Or a fool to hide my fears.

--Kathy Kabrick

## GRADUATION

The beginning...
The climbing to achieve
Behind doors
Questions
To be answered
Seeking,
We find wisdom
Graduation--
The end
of the beginning...
A step achieved
But so far to go.

--Charlotte Wolfe

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